



# Department of Justice

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## **SACRAMENTO MAN ADMITS FILING FALSE CLAIM TO STEAL HURRICANE KATRINA DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that ANDRE D. MORNING, 53, of Sacramento, pleaded guilty today before United States District Judge Lawrence K. Karlton to filing a false claim for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance.

In September 2005, the Attorney General for the United States Department of Justice created the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force designed to deter, investigate, and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft, procurement fraud, and insurance fraud. The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force includes the FBI, the U.S. Inspectors General community, the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys, and others. This case was investigated by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Michelle Rodriguez, who is prosecuting this case, on November 13, 2005, MORNING applied with FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) for disaster relief, including cash and housing assistance. MORNING also applied to the Red Cross and the Salvation Army for cash and lodging benefits as a disaster victim. MORNING's lodging claim was approved, and FEMA paid for MORNING to stay at a Marysville, Calif. motel for over a month. FEMA later determined that MORNING's so-called destroyed primary residence in New Orleans was in fact a government office building.

MORNING fraudulently obtained nearly \$3,000 in Katrina Disaster relief and was expecting a check for an additional \$2,000 when his scheme was uncovered.

On April 1, 2008, MORNING's associate, JOHN M. FORD, 35, also of Sacramento, pleaded guilty to using the U.S. Mail to obtain Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance by fraud. FORD and MORNING supported each other's false claims to FEMA officials. On June 10, 2008, FORD received a sentence of 36 months probation. FORD was also ordered to pay a special assessment of \$100 and restitution of \$ 5,835.

MORNING is facing up to five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and three years of federal supervised release. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors. Sentencing is scheduled for August 26, 2008.

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